

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
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R 071226Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6388
INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USSAG NKP THAI
CINCPAC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 14037

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, TH
SUBJ: REDUCTION US FORCES IN THAILAND

DEPT PASS SECDEF

REF: A. BANGKOK 13782
B. STATE 161191 (NODIS)

1. WITH SECOND JOINT MEETING NOW OUT OF THE WAY (SEE REPORT REF A) AND NEXT MEETING NOT YET SCHEDULED AND PERHPAS POSPONABLE UNTIL SEPT 20 OR LATER, I WOULD LIKE TO ASSESS BRIEFLY WHERE WE ARE AND WHAT NEXT STEPS WE SHOULD ENVISAGE.

2. SEPTEMBER 4 MEETING AND ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRIMIN THANOM AND SECDEF ON SEPTEMBER 5 HAVE PROVIDED FURHTER EVIDENCE OF OUR READINESS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH RTG ON THIS MATTER AND TO MAKE PRUDENT REDUCTIONS. PERMISSION TO REFER PUBLICLY ALSO TO DEPARTURE TEN KC-135'S HAS GIVEN RTG SOMETHING TO POINT TO IN THE WAY OF STRATEGIC AS WELL AS TACTICAL REDUCTIONS. AS INDIVIDUAL UNITS OF THOSE ALREADY ANNOUNCED LEAVE ONE BY ONE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE MADE, IMPRESSION OF SECRET

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CONTINUED MOTION, ALBEIT MODEST, WILL BE LEFT WITH PUBLIC HERE.

3. AT SAME TIME STATEMENTS FROM RTG OFFICIALS AND EVEN PRESS HAVE PROVIDED REMINDERS TO PUBLIC OF THE IMPORTANT OF THAILAND'S

PERMITTING THE US TO MAINTAIN A POSITION OF STRENGTH HERE
IN ORDER TO KEEP NORTH VIETNAM IN LINE (BANGKOK 13705). THAI PUBLIC
HAS ALSO BEEN REMINDED OF NEGATIVE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES WHICH
CAN STEM FROM DEPARTURE OF US MILITARY.

4. THUS I BELIEVE OUR POSITION IS AND FOR SOME TIME WILL
CONTINUE TO BE MUCH MORE TENABLE THAN IN EARLY AUGUST WHEN
NEWSPAPER AND STUDENT CAMPAIGNS TO FORCE WITHDRAWAL US
MILITARY WERE DEVELOPING OMINOUSLY. HOWEVER WE SHOULD PREPARE
OURSELVES NOW, AS RECOMMENDED EARLIER, FOR POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED
PRESSURES AND FOR CERTAINTY THAT RTG SIDE AT NEXT JOINT MEETING WILL
INSISTS ON SOME FURTHER REDUCTIONS AND SPECIFICALLY DEPARTURE OF
SOME B-52'S (PARA 3, REF A). I BELIEVE WE SHOULD ALSO TAKE
ACCOUNT OF OUR EARLIER INDICATION TO THE RTG OF FOLLOW-ON REDUCTIONS
WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF RETURNING TO APPROXIMATELY THE LEVEL OF US
FORCES THAT EXISTED PRIOR TO LAST YEAR'S AUGMENTATION (REF B, PARA D).

IN THIS CONNECTION YOU ARE AWARE THAT THE FIGURE OF
32,000 HAS SURFACED IN BANGKOK, PRESUMABLY AS RESULT
OF REFERENCE BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER GENERAL CHARTCHAI.
IN THE SEPTEMBER 4 MEETING THE THAI SIDE PRESSED FOR JOINT
PLANNING NOW TO REDUCE THE US FORCES HERE TO THE PRE-
AUGMENTATION LEVEL. GIVEN OUR DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO
AUGMENT RAPIDLY THEY HAVE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHY WE
CANNOT NOW REDEPLOY FURTHER, INCLUDING SOME B-52'S, WITHOUT
REDUCING OUR REACTION CAPABILITY; THEY VOLUNTEERED IN
THIS CONNECTION THAT WE SHOULD ALSO BE WORKING ON PLANS TO
REINFORCE IN THAILAND SHOULD THE NEED ARISE.

5. THEREFORE I WOULD LIKE TO BE AUTHORIZED WHEN THE JOINT
MEETINGS ON FORCE REDUCTION ARE RESUMED (AT THAI REQUEST)
TO DISCUSS AND SUBSEQUENTLY ANNOUNCE A PATTERN OF REDUTIONS
WHICH WOULD BRING US AT SOME SPECIFIED DATE SOME MONTHS HENCE DOWN
TO A LEVEL AROUND 30,000, ASSUMING MEANWHILE NO SERIOUS DETERIORA-
TION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN INDOCHINA. I ALSO CONSIDER THAT
TOWARD THE END OF SEPTEMBER IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ANNOUNCE A
FURTHER MODES NEAR-TERM CUT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE SOME
SECRET

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B-52'S. THIS WOULD REPRESENT THE FIRST STEP IN THE LONGER
TERM PATTERN OF REDUCTIONS. MEANWHILE WE WILL BE ARRANGING FOR
BRIEFINGS OF GENERAL KRIANGSAK ON US STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS
(PARA 4 REF A) TO ENABLE HIM TO BE MORE PERSUASIVE WITHIN RTG
IN RESISTING PRESSURES FOR REDUCTION BEYOND THOSE WE CONSIDER
PRUDENT.
UNGER

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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